

Amendments to the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-22 (cancelled).

Claim 23. (currently amended) A method for the ~~discontinuous~~ treatment of contaminated material comprising feeding said contaminated material via an input unit to a conveyor system extending through a treatment chamber which slants upward in the conveyor transport direction and which comprises first treatment zone adjacent the lower end of the treatment chamber and second treatment zone extending from the first treatment zone to the upper end of the treatment chamber, and wherein said conveyor system comprises a screw conveyor and said screw conveyor has a bearing at only one end and rests on slide runners, heating and treating the contaminated materials in said treatment chamber, and discharging the treated materials via a discharge element, wherein said contaminated material is moistened in a liquid reservoir in said first treatment zone by liquid present in the contaminated material or water added from outside the treatment chamber, the liquid in said liquid reservoir being to a temperature lower than the boiling point of water, and thereafter heating the contaminated material in said second treatment zone at least partially to a temperature above the boiling point of water, wherein

the input unit and discharge element are closed off, in order to build up steam pressure ~~greater than ambient air pressure~~ to disinfect the contaminated material.

Claim 24. (previously presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein said contaminated material is contaminated with infectious microorganisms.

Claim 25. (cancelled).

Claim 26. (previously presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein the steam pressure in said second zone is generated by evaporation of the inherent moisture in the contaminated material.

Claim 27. (previously presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein the steam pressure in said second zone is generated by evaporation of liquid water added to the contaminated material from outside the treatment chamber.

Claim 28. (previously presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein the steam pressure in said second zone is generated by introducing steam into said treatment chamber.

Claim 29. (previously presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein the liquid level in said liquid reservoir is regulated by an overflow.

Claim 30. (previously presented) A method according to claim 29, wherein liquid discharged from said overflow is recycled back to the liquid reservoir.

Claim 31. (previously presented) A method according to claim 23, wherein the contaminated material to be treated is introduced in portions into the treatment chamber such that a plurality of portions are present in the treatment chamber at the same time, said portions being introduced into and discharged from the treatment chamber through slide valves or locks.

Claim 32. (cancelled).

Claim 33. (currently amended) An apparatus for ~~discontinuously~~ treating contaminated material, said apparatus comprising a treatment chamber which slants upward from a lower inlet end to an upper discharge end and which comprises first heating zone adjacent the lower end of the treatment chamber and a second heating zone extending from the first treatment zone to the upper end of the treatment chamber, an input unit and said inlet end for introducing contaminated material to be treated into the treatment chamber, a discharge element at said discharge end for discharging treated material from said treatment chamber, a conveyor system for conveying material to be treated through said treatment chamber, wherein said conveyor system comprises a screw conveyor, and said screw

conveyor has a bearing at only one end and rests on slide runners, means for moistening contaminated material in said first heating zone, means for heating liquid in said first heating zone to a temperature below the boiling point of water, and means for heating moistened contaminated material in said second heating zone at least partially to a temperature above the boiling point of water, and means for closing off the input unit and the discharge element, to generate steam pressure ~~greater than ambient air pressure~~ to disinfect the contaminated material.

Claim 34. (cancelled).

Claim 35. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 33, further comprising means for introducing steam into said second heating zone.

Claim 36. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 33, further comprising means for introducing liquid water into said first heating zone.

Claim 37. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 33, wherein said first treatment zone comprises a liquid reservoir, and further comprising an overflow for regulating the liquid level in said liquid reservoir.

Claim 38. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 37, further comprising a collection vessel which receives liquid from said overflow and a

return line which connects said collection vessel to said treatment chamber for recycling liquid from said collection vessel back to said treatment chamber.

Claim 39. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 38, wherein said overflow, said collection vessel and said return line are maintained at the same pressure as said treatment chamber.

Claim 40. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 33, wherein at least one of said heating means is provided in an inner wall of said treatment chamber.

Claim 41. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 33, wherein at least one of said heating means is provided in said conveyor system.

Claim 42. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 33, comprising means for controlled introduction of microwave energy into said treatment chamber or said conveyor system.

Claim 43. (cancelled).

Claim 44. (cancelled).

Claim 45. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 33, further comprising a shredder in said input unit.

Claim 46. (previously presented) An apparatus according to claim 33, comprising slide valves or locks for opening and closing said input unit and said discharge element.

Claim 47. (previously presented) In combination, a shredder unit and a plurality of treating apparatus according to claim 33, said treating apparatus being arranged in parallel so that they can be supplied simultaneously or sequentially by the shredder unit.